
THE ACTS CHURCH 2:42
"EXPERIENCE REAL CHURCH"

TEXT: Joshua 20:1-9 KJV

The LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying, (2) Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: (3) That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. (4) And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. (5) And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime. (6) And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled. (7) And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah. (8) And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. (9) These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

INTRO: The Road To Safety

Last week we looked at a summary of chapters 12-19

*Failure to **drive out the inhabitants** brought grief to the Israelites later.*

I. THE CITIES OF REFUGE

The course to be followed by the involuntary manslayer was very minutely prescribed. He was to hurry with all speed to the nearest city of refuge, and stand at the entering of the gate till the elders assembled, and then to declare his cause in their ears. If he failed to establish his innocence, he got no protection; but if he made out his case he was free from the avenger of blood, so long as he remained within the city or its precincts. If, however, he wandered out, he was at the mercy of the avenger. Further, he was to remain in the city till the death of the high priest, it being probable that by that time all keen feeling in reference to this deed would have subsided, and no one would then think that justice had been defrauded when a man with blood on his hands was allowed to go at large.

The Cities Of Refuge And The Meaning Of The Names:

WEST OF JORDAN

Kedesh— Kedesh means to sanctify, set apart, consecrate and to make holy
Shechem— between the shoulders or burden bearer - Strength
Kirjath-Arba or Hebron—Fellowship

EAST OF JORDAN

Ramoth-Gilead—Uplifting
Golan—Happiness
Bezer—a fortified place – Safety

John Wesley

Cities of refuge - Designed to typify the relief which the gospel provides for poor, penitent sinners, and their protection from the curse of the law and the wrath of God, in our Lord Jesus, to whom believers fly for refuge. –

Moody makes the application:

As the cities of refuge were so situated as to be accessible from every part of the land, so Christ is very accessible to needy sinners …

1 JOHN 2:1-2 KJV

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, ***Jesus Christ the righteous***: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Psalms 103:11-13 KJV

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. (12) As far as the east is from the west, ***so far hath he removed our transgressions*** from us. (13) Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

II. The LORD, He is my refuge

Deuteronomy 33:27 KJV

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

2 Samuel 22:2-4 KJV

And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; (3) The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. (4) I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

Psalms 91:1-3 KJV

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. (2) I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. (3) Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

III. Comparing The Cities Of Refuge And Our Refuge In Jesus

- ✓ ***Both Jesus and the cities of refuge*** are *within easy reach* of a needy person; they were of no use unless someone could get to the place of refuge.
- ✓ ***Both Jesus and the cities of refuge*** are *open to all*, not just the Israelite; no one needs to fear that they would be turned away from their place of refuge in the time of need.
- ✓ ***Both Jesus and the cities of refuge*** became a place where the one in need would *live*.
- ✓ ***Both Jesus and the cities of refuge*** are the *only solution* for the one in need.

✓ ***Both Jesus and the cities of refuge*** provide protection *only within their boundaries*.

A crucial distinction between the cities of refuge and our refuge in Jesus. ***The cities of refuge only helped the innocent, But The Guilty Can Come To Jesus And Find Refuge***.

An Illustration Of God's Grace In Redemption

(1) ***God provides a city of refuge in Christ***. He is a refuge from the dangers that beset us, from the consequences of our own acts, from the indwelling power of sin.
(2) ***This refuge is for the most guilty***. Christ a refuge for the guilty. Men flee to Christ for mercy.
(3) ***This refuge is in our midst***. The six cities of refuge were situated in convenient central positions at different points of the land, so that every Israelite might be within reach of one. Christ has filled His followers with His Holy Spirit and given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Jewish commentators tell us how in later times, in order that the sanctuary offered to the involuntary homicide might be more secure—
(a) The roads leading to the cities of refuge were ***always kept in thorough repair***, and required to be about 32 cubits (about 48 feet) broad;
(b) ***All obstructions were removed*** that might stay the flier's foot or hinder his speed;
(c) No hillock was left, ***no river was allowed over which there was not a bridge***;
(d) At every turning there were ***posts erected bearing the words 'Refuge***,' to guide the unhappy man in his flight;
(e) When once settled in such a city the manslayer had a convenient habitation assigned to him, and the citizens were to teach him some trade that he might support himself.

Let Me Break It Down For You

Church = Gathering of Believers (Disciples making Disciples)

2 Corinthians 5:19-21 KJV

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) **Now then we** are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you **by us**: **we pray you in Christ's stead**, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him **to be sin for us**, who knew no sin; that **we might be made the righteousness of God** in him.

The Cities of Refuge = the Gospel (the Road to Jesus)

Some years ago:

Power Bracelet **Wordless Book** **4 Spiritual Laws**
EvangiCube **Steps to Peace with God** **The Roman Road**

Road Signs = Modern Day Witnessing

ACTS 1:8-11 KJV

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (9) And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. (10) And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; (11) Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.